

REMARKS

In response to the Final Office Action mailed on August 16, 2004, Applicant files this Request for Continued Examination. To further the prosecution of this Application, Applicant submits the following amendments to claims as well as the following remarks discussing patentability of currently amended and newly added claims. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for his careful review of the claims.

In this reply, Applicant cancels claims 7, 8, 10, 11, 15-18, 25, 26, 28, 29, 33-39, 41-44, 46-51, and 54 as indicated above. Claims 5, 23, and 18 were previously canceled. The following remarks address the rejections of previously pending claims. New claims 58-76 are being submitted with this reply. Note that no new matter has been added as a result of amending or adding these claims to the application.

If the Examiner believes, after reviewing this Response, that the pending claims are not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the Applicant(s) Representative at the number below for an interview.

Objections to Claim 57

The Office Action includes an objection to claim 57. Applicant has modified claim 57 to depend from claim 53 to cure the issue regarding lack of antecedent basis.

Patentability of Claims 1 and 19

The Examiner has cited Bapat (U.S. Patent 6,236,996) and Bhatt, et al., (U.S. Patent 6,502,093) as the closest prior art. Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the interview held on October 18, 2004 to discuss pending claims in light of Bapat and Bhatt. The presently submitted claims include limitations not found in the cited references.

Claim 1 now recites execution of a disregard instruction, "the disregard instruction including disregard criteria identifying a type of other rule operations in

the selected set of rules to disregard from performing; and “after performing the unconditional disregard instruction in the given rule:

i) evaluating the disregard criteria against any remaining unperformed rule operations in other rules of the selected set of rules, the other rules being rules other than the given rule;

ii) marking any remaining unperformed rule operations in the other rules of the selected set of rules that match the disregard criteria to be disregarded from further rule processing; and

iii) executing remaining unmarked rule operations in the other rules in the selected set of rules.”

Applicant submits that claim is novel and includes limitations not taught or suggested by the cited art. First, the claimed invention includes executing a disregard instruction which itself includes disregard criteria identifying a type of rules in the selected set of rules that shall be disregarded from performing. For example, as discussed in the present application, the disregard rule may indicate to disregard all rule operations associated with “payroll data” in the selected set of rules. In this case, rule operations other than those associated with payroll data are executed and not those associated with data payroll. Thus, performance of a disregard instruction in one rule affects future performance of specifically identified other rules in a selected set of rules. The cited references disclose a method of performing a rule and determining whether that rule shall be applied or not applied. There is no mention of utilizing disregard criteria as in the claimed invention to identify which specific rule operations to disregard.

Additionally, the claimed invention includes “evaluating” and “marking any remaining unperformed rule operations in the other rules of the selected set of rules that match the disregard criteria.” The cited references disclose performing a rule operation to determine whether to exclude a corresponding rule from further consideration (Bhatt, column 7, lines 8-9), not excluding “other rules” of a selected set of rules as in the claimed invention.

Claims 2-4, 6, 9, and 12-14 depend from claim 1 further include distinctions not found in the cited references and therefore should also be allowable in view of the cited references.

Claim 19 includes similar limitations as claim 1 and also should be in allowable form as well as claims 20-22, and 24-32.

Patentability of Claim 45

The Examiner has cited Bapat (U.S. Patent 6,236,996) and Bhatt, et al., (U.S. Patent 6,502,093) as the closest prior art.

Amended claim 45 now recites performing a disregard instruction in a first rule that causes non-performance of a rule operation in a second rule of a selected set of rules. At least one rule operation (other than a disregarded rule operation) in the second rule is performed. In contradistinction, the techniques recited in the cited references include either disregarding all other instructions in a set of selected rules after executing a rule or disregarding only the rule including the disregard instruction from further consideration to determine whether to allow the access request. Thus, the cited references do not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

Patentability of Claim 52

The Examiner has cited Bapat (U.S. Patent 6,236,996) and Bhatt, et al., (U.S. Patent 6,502,093) as the closest prior art.

Claim 52 now recites execution of "a disregard instruction that, when executed, limits performance to fewer than all rule operations in a second rule of the selected set of rules as specified by disregard criteria in the disregard instruction." Consequently, executing a disregard instruction in one rule causes some rule operations of another rule to be disregarded. Further, the disregard criteria associated with the disregard instruction specifies which rule operations to disregard. None of the cited references teaches or suggests this technique.

Claims 53, 55, 56 and 57 depend from claim 52 and include further distinctions not found in the cited references and therefore should also be allowable.

Patentability of New Claims 58-76

New claim 58 recites “based on performing the conditional disregard rule operation, disregarding execution of at least one rule operation other than the conditional disregard rule operation in the set of rules as specified by the conditional disregard rule operation; and after performing the conditional disregard rule operation, performing at least one other rule operation in the set of rules not specified by disregard criteria in the conditional disregard rule operation.”

According to the Examiner, Bhatt discloses performing segments of a rule to determine whether that rule shall be applied or excluded from further consideration whether to allow an access request. In contradistinction, claim 58 recites that the conditional disregard rule operation in a given rule applies to rule operations other than the rule operation containing the conditional disregard instruction.

Claims 59-63 depend from claim 58 and include further distinctions not found in the cited references and therefore should also be allowable. For example, claim 60 recites “comparing disregard criteria in a data field associated with the conditional disregard rule operation to data in other rule operations to identify which other rule operations in the selected set of rules to disregard from performance.”

Claims 64-71 include further distinguishing features of the invention over the cited prior art. Applicant also requests allowance of these claims.

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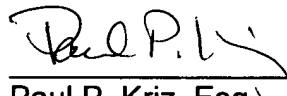
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that the pending claims as well as newly added claims are in condition for allowance. A Notice to this affect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after reviewing this Response, that the pending claims are not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the Applicant(s) Representative at the number below for an interview.

Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time which is required to maintain the pendency of this case. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0901.

If the enclosed papers or fees are considered incomplete, the Patent Office is respectfully request(s)ed to contact the undersigned Attorney at (508) 366-9600, in Westborough, Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted,



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